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**Testimony of the City of New Haven
Before the Commerce Committee**

Regarding

**SB 535
AN ACT CONCERNING FUNDING FOR THE
NEW HAVEN WORKS PROGRAM**

Submitted by
**Rebecca Bombero
City of New Haven
February 14, 2013**

The City of New Haven would like to express support for SB 535, an act concerning funding for New Haven Works. New Haven Works is a new program intended to better connect New Haven residents to meaningful employment opportunities in the City and surrounding labor market area. The program was launched following extensive study by a Jobs Pipeline Working Group established by the New Haven Board of Aldermen.

The working group was comprised of local elected officials, corporate leaders and city officials as well as representatives from labor, the unemployed and youth populations. The group came together in 2012 to address the challenges related to rising unemployment in the center city and the skills gap at a time of strong local economic growth. By way of background, the City held its jobs base through the recession and New Haven remains the economic center of south central Connecticut with approximately 60% of the available job postings for the entire region. However, the unemployment rate remains unacceptably high at 11.3% (12/2012) and significantly higher when factoring in marginally-attached workers.

The working group's recommendations were adopted by the Board of Aldermen and, in remarkably little time, the New Haven Works organization was formed to implement the recommendations. Partnerships were established with leading employers and New Haven Works is ready to launch next month. It will operate essentially as a traditional workforce funnel blended with the best elements of a private employment agency in order develop specific pipelines to jobs with partner employers. In this way, New Haven Works is intended to be a resource for businesses seeking a focused and skilled workforce. With an intense focus on case management, training and employer connections, New Haven Works is a promising new model for employment services in urban areas and we strongly encourage your support.